

# Australia Celebrates Domestic Air Mail Centenary



On July 1 Australia Post issued two stamps to commemorate the centenary of domestic air mail. Australia Post Philatelic Manager, Michael Zsolt said the centenary of domestic Air Mail was an aviation milestone and one that also highlighted the vital role air mail has played to help keep people and communities connected.

"The development of aviation greatly influenced transport and communications in the early 20th century, and in a country such as Australia it helped overcome the tyranny of distance. We are pleased to release this commemorative stamp issue, marking a significant milestone in postal and aviation history," Mr Zsolt said.

This year will mark 100 years since French aviator Maurice Guillaux (1883–1917) made the first air mail flight in Australia. Guillaux left Melbourne on July 16, 1914, and arrived in Sydney on July 18. The flying time was 9-1/4 hours, with seven stops en route. On his arrival, Guillaux was welcomed by Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson.

Guillaux's flight was, at the time, the longest air mail flight worldwide. His Bleriot XI monoplane was constructed of wood and canvas held together with wire and glue and powered by an engine of around 50 horsepower. The modest cargo included 1,785 souvenir postcards,



*A souvenir card flown on the July 16-18 First Official Australian Aerial Mail flight with a 1p Kangaroo tied by a July 16 purple double oval flight datestamp.*



official letters, a small number of parcels and other items. A re-enactment of the first domestic air mail flight took place on July 12-14.

Jo Muré of the Australia Post Design Studio designed the stamps, which are based on Kevin McKay's watercolor sketches made during the development of the 1964 50th Anniversary of the First Air Mail Service stamp issue. The illustrations are held in the Australia Post National Philatelic Collection.

The Australia Post first domestic air mail flight stamp issue comprises one domestic base-rate stamp (70c) and one international-rate stamp (\$2.60). The prestige booklet accompanying the stamp issue covers the history of Australia's air mail service. This collectable product includes blocks of stamps exclusive to this product as well as the new commemorative air mail stickers.

The stamp issue's associated products include a minisheet, first day cover, stamp pack, maxicard set of two, prestige souvenir cover, and a postal and numismatic cover.

The 100th Anniversary of First Air Mail stamp issue is available from 1 July 2014 at [www.auspost.com.au/stamps](http://www.auspost.com.au/stamps) or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) on 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.